

# THE GENERATION COMPANIES

**THEIR ROOTS RUN DEEP.** FORMER WINGMATES RON JACOBSEN (LEFT) AND MARK DALEY HAVE WORKED TOGETHER TO BUILD THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL GENERATION COMPANIES.



## Marketplace Believers

At the helm of a quickly growing company that owns and operates hotel properties in several states, dynamic duo and fellow ORU alumni Mark Daley and Ron Jacobsen have taken on the challenge of making God and His values a central part of their business.

BY RACHEL WEGNER 07

In the professional world of H. Mark Daley III, leading a company by a standard of faith is a rarity. In an era when some businesses employ an “end justifies the means” strategy for the sake of growth, Daley holds his company to a mission that seeks to glorify God. As CEO and founder of The Generation Companies (“Generation” for short), Daley infuses the values of honesty and faith into his business practices.

“The goal is to operate a business in a way that honors the Lord,” Daley said during a phone interview last fall. “It has always been the primary motivation and the overall focus when we’re making decisions. To an ORU student that sounds commonsensical, but the more you get out in the world, the more you realize that is really rare.”

Founded in September 1996, Research Triangle Park, N.C.-based Generation owns and operates extended-stay hotels. They partner with two franchisors, Intercontinental Hotels Group and Choice Hotels, to develop, acquire and

operate such extended-stay hotel brands as Staybridge Suites, Candlewood Suites, Mainstay Suites and Suburban Extended Stay Hotels.

Daley comes from a family legacy of hotel ownership that began when his grandfather developed his first hotel property in 1959 and went on to found Daley Investments. Daley’s father took over the family business and offered Mark a job when he graduated from ORU. Daley, however, did not want to pursue the family business until he had received experience elsewhere. He took a job in the banking industry as a commercial real estate lender with Wachovia Bank for three years.

“I wanted to earn some stripes on my own before seriously considering doing anything with the family,” Daley said. “In hindsight, I’m really glad I did that, to have the opportunity to work in a large organization and get some really great training. I was able to bring some additional skills to the table by the time I started working with the family.”

In 1994, Daley took on the role of president of Daley Investments. Soon after, he became intrigued with the emerging extended-stay segment of the hospitality industry and formed Generation to create an arm's-length vehicle for investing family and third-party resources in these types of hotels. He called his former wingmate and fellow ORU business graduate, Ron Jacobsen, to see if he wanted to partner with him in growing Generation.

Initially, Jacobsen turned down the offer because he was happily settled with his family and his job in Baton Rouge, La. But the prospect of helping Daley build a company intrigued him and, after much prayer and discussion with his wife, Rebecca, they made the move to North Carolina in December 1995.

"It's been an incredible ride ever since," Jacobsen said.

With the combination of Jacobsen's business management and operations background and Daley's talents in business and finance, Generation began to gain momentum. Today, Generation owns extended-stay properties in North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Virginia and Tennessee, managing more than \$200 million in assets and employing more than 350 people. Daley's father remained involved in the family business for many years. Although he recently retired, he still serves on the board of directors for Generation.

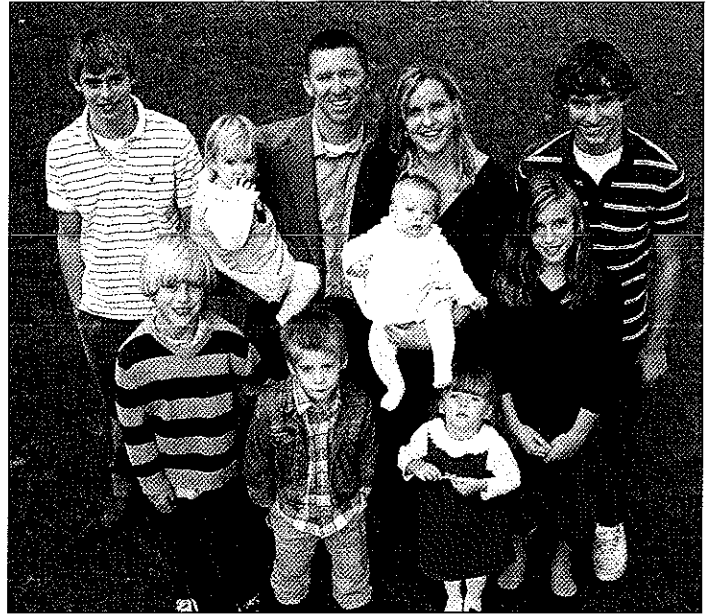
On a day-to-day basis, Daley handles tasks that include investor relations, franchisor matters and working closely with the company's officers. He also makes executive decisions about buying and investing in properties. Some employees, he added, comment that they never dreamed they could work in a faith-based corporate culture like that at Generation. Daley said one of the most rewarding things is to have employees and investors alike respond positively to the way Generation holds to its mission statement. He also said both investors and the media have taken notice of how they conduct business.

"We're just going about our daily life the best we can," Daley said. "Having that kind of impact on people is really what we want."

Jacobsen, who serves as the vice president of operations, also attributed the growth of Generation and its reputation to Daley's character as a businessman. He said that Daley has always "thought big" from the beginning.

"Mark is an incredible strategic thinker," Jacobsen said. "He's honest and very sincere. In the investment community and the financial world, to find somebody who is strategic and honest is rare."

Despite their growing list of accomplishments and promising future, both Daley and Jacobsen attribute the foundation of their success to what they learned while at ORU. Daley said he enjoyed the diversity of people he was able to interact



Meet the Jacobsens! Top row, left to right: Ben, 14, Elizabeth, 2, Ron, Rebecca, Will, 16 and Mary Katherine, 16 months. Bottom row, left to right: Christian, 9, Luke, 6, Caroline, 4 and Anna, 13.



The Daley family includes Rebecca, 15, Mark, Kate, 10, Lisa, Hope, 13 and their dogs, Daniel and Andy.

with at ORU and also that he has applied concepts he learned at ORU to what he does now. Jacobsen echoed a similar sentiment, adding that he and Daley strive to learn what it means to be believers in the marketplace. He also pointed out that ORU was where both he and Daley met their wives.

"ORU was a very strategic place for us to be," Jacobsen said. "God used it as a launching point for us. I was able to experiment with a like-minded friend and wrap all the things we learned at ORU around this business."

*Editor's Note: Mark Daley, a 1988 graduate, lives in Chapel Hill, N.C. Ron Jacobsen, also an '88 grad, resides in Cary, N.C. More information about The Generation Companies can be found at [www.generationcompanies.com](http://www.generationcompanies.com).*